

Minsk, October 28th, 2009

*Dear representatives of the European Commission
and delegates of the First Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum!*

We, representatives of Civil Society organizations in Belarus, appreciate highly the initiatives of the European Commission aimed at founding the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, as well as the efforts of the organizers launching the work of the Forum. We consider this Forum as a mechanism of a legitimate inclusion of Civil Society into relations between partner countries (Belarus in particular) and the EU, which are under development within the scope of the Eastern Partnership initiative. At the stage of preparation of the Forum, we would like to contribute to the organization of its efficient work.

According to our understanding of the role and mission of the Civil Society Forum, we consider that the main objective of the first Forum, which will take place on November 16-17th, 2009 in Brussels, is **to create a procedure and organizational basis to include Civil Society into an interaction of the EU and partner countries.**

We propose to the participants and organizers of the Forum **to start a preliminary discussion** of the Forum agenda, as well as the question of frames and responsibilities of the Civil Society Forum at large, forming its working bodies, working mechanisms, budget etc. It will help all of us to come to the Forum more prepared and save time for solving many questions during the Forum, where we have only one day and a half for everything.

On behalf of the group of delegates of the Forum, as well as other Civil Society representatives from Belarus, we propose to the Forum organizers and participants from all partner countries of the Eastern Partnership and the EU representatives our ideas concerning the agenda and working program of the Forum. We are also ready to present for a discussion our proposals about the Forum regulations in the nearest future and hope to get similar proposals from other Forum delegates from the EU and partner countries.

We consider it fundamental **to include into the agenda** of the Forum **the following questions:**

1. Decision about the status and format of work of the Civil Society Forum: principles of selecting delegates to future Forums, structure and work frames of continuing bodies, mechanisms of interaction and influence of the Civil Society Forum to intergovernmental (bilateral and multilateral) structures of the Eastern Partnership – thematic platforms etc.
2. Forming continuing bodies and structures of the Civil Society Forum.
3. Development of proposals for agendas of EP thematic platforms on behalf of the Civil Society Forum.

In our opinion, these questions are the most important for self-organization of Civil Society and further efficient work of the Forum. Discussions within the scope of 4 thematic working groups will be more productive and useful if they are accompanied by a solving procedure and organization questions which guarantee sustainability and independence of the Civil Society Forum as a vital partner in the Eastern Partnership Initiative.

We also attach to this letter our **proposals to the Forum program** for their discussion and coordination with Civil Society Forum organizers and participants.

With best regards and hope for productive cooperation,

The Civil Society Forum delegates:

Ulad Vialichka, International Consortium EUROBELARUS

Tatiana Poshevalova, Centre of Social Innovations

Viktar Karnienka, Movement "For Freedom"

Svetlana Karaleva, National Council of Youth and Children Organizations RADA

Zhana Litvina, Belarusian Association of Journalists

Siarhei Matskevich, NGO Assembly of Belarus

Ales' Mikhalevich, Belarusian Free Trade-Union

Irina Sukhiy, NGO Ecohome

Dmitry Karpievich, Education Center POST

Siarhei Drazdouski, National Association of Wheelchair Users

Miraslau Kobasa, L.Sapieha Foundation

Tatsiana Hatsura, Belarusian Helsinki Committee

Yaraslau Bekish, the Green Net

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